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# ADB Launches \$70 Billion Asia-Pacific Power and Digital Initiative at Samarkand

5 May 2026 · **IR** · **ECONOMY** · **GS2** · **GS3**

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# ADB Launches \$70 Billion Asia-Pacific Power and Digital Initiative at Samarkand

5 May 2026 · 3 min read · 2 tags

## WHY IN NEWS

ADB (Asian Development Bank) President Masato Kanda unveiled a landmark \$70 billion initiative at the ADB’s Annual Meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on May 3, 2026 — comprising two flagship programmes: the **Pan-Asia Power Grid Initiative** (\$50 billion, renewable energy interconnection) and the **Asia-Pacific Digital Highway** (\$20 billion, digital connectivity). The initiative aims to reach 200 million people with first-time broadband access and create 4 million jobs by 2035.

## INITIATIVE COMPONENTS

### 1. Pan-Asia Power Grid Initiative — \$50 Billion

| FEATURE     | DETAIL   |
|-------------|--|
| Outlay      | \$50 billion   |
| Goal        | Cross-border renewable energy transmission infrastructure  |
| Coverage    | Asia-Pacific region — 48 developing member countries   |
| Rationale   | Countries have excess renewable capacity in some areas; others face deficits — cross-border grids enable trading |
| Examples    | Central Asian solar + hydro → South Asia; Southeast Asian geothermal → ASEAN grid                                |
| India angle | India–Nepal hydro power trade; potential SAARC power grid  |

## 2. Asia-Pacific Digital Highway — \$20 Billion

| FEATURE        | DETAIL  |
|----------------|---|
| Outlay         | \$20 billion  |
| Goal           | Fibre optic networks, satellite connectivity, data centres                |
| Target         | 200 million first-time broadband users; 450 million improved connectivity |
| Jobs           | ~4 million jobs by 2035   |
| Cost reduction | ~40% reduction in broadband costs in remote areas                         |
| India angle    | BharatNet complementarity; India as regional data hub                     |

### ABOUT ADB

| FEATURE              | DETAIL   |
|----------------------|--|
| Full name            | Asian Development Bank                                     |
| HQ                   | Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines                |
| Founded              | 1966   |
| Members              | 69 members (50 regional + 19 non-regional)                 |
| ADB President        | <b>Masato Kanda</b> (Japan; assumed 2025)                  |
| Largest shareholders | Japan and USA (each ~15.6%)                                |
| India's shareholding | ~6.3% (4th largest; after Japan, USA, China ~6.4%)         |
| Mission              | Prosperous, inclusive, resilient, sustainable Asia-Pacific |
| Annual lending       | ~\$35–40 billion/year                                      |

**ADB Annual Meeting:** Held each year in May; rotating city; shareholders + heads of state/finance ministers attend. 2026: Samarkand, Uzbekistan.

## SAMARKAND, UZBEKISTAN — KEY FACTS

| FEATURE                 | DETAIL   |
|-------------------------|--|
| Country                 | Uzbekistan   |
| Region                  | Central Asia   |
| Historical significance | UNESCO World Heritage Site; Silk Road crossroads; Timurid Empire capital |
| Uzbekistan president    | Shavkat Mirziyoyev   |
| Uzbekistan–India ties   | Strategic partnership; India invested in energy, pharma; joint exercises |
| SCO connection          | Uzbekistan hosted SCO Summit 2022 (Samarkand Declaration)                |

## INDIA–ADB RELATIONSHIP

India is one of ADB’s largest borrowers:

| PARAMETER             | VALUE   |
|-----------------------|---|
| India’s ADB borrowing | Among top 3 annually                                  |
| Key sectors           | Urban infrastructure, transport, energy, water supply |
| Recent loans          | Delhi–Meerut RRTS, solar energy projects, urban water |
| India’s voting share  | ~6.3%   |

India stands to benefit significantly from the Pan-Asia Power Grid — particularly through:

- **South Asia sub-regional electricity trade** (Nepal hydro exports, Bhutan power)
- **ONE SUN ONE WORLD ONE GRID (OSOWOG):** India’s initiative for a global solar power grid — aligns with ADB’s Pan-Asia Power Grid vision

## UPSC RELEVANCE

| PAPER                         | ANGLE  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| GS2 — International Relations | ADB, multilateral development banks, India's memberships             |
| GS3 — Economy                 | Development finance, infrastructure investment, digital connectivity |
| GS3 — Environment             | Cross-border renewable energy, green infrastructure financing        |

**Mains Keywords:** ADB, Pan-Asia Power Grid, Asia-Pacific Digital Highway, Masato Kanda, Samarkand 2026, OSOWOG, multilateral development banks, cross-border renewable energy, digital connectivity Asia

### Prelims Facts Corner

| ITEM                        | FACT   |
|-----------------------------|--|
| ADB \$70 billion initiative | Pan-Asia Power Grid \$50 bn + Digital Highway \$20 bn              |
| Announced                   | ADB Annual Meeting, Samarkand, Uzbekistan, May 3, 2026             |
| ADB President               | Masato Kanda (Japan)   |
| ADB HQ                      | Manila, Philippines (Mandaluyong City)                             |
| ADB founded                 | 1966   |
| ADB members                 | 69 (50 regional + 19 non-regional)                                 |
| Largest shareholders        | Japan + USA (~15.6% each)  |
| India's ADB share           | ~6.3% (4th largest; China ~6.4% is 3rd)                            |
| Digital Highway target      | 200 million first-time broadband users; 4 million jobs by 2035     |
| India alignment             | OSOWOG (One Sun One World One Grid) — global solar grid initiative |

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